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ABSTRACT

John J. Gumperz' interactional analysis goes beyond traditional work in discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and ethnography and may, ultimately, lead to the development of new sociolinguistic theory regarding problematic interaction. The likelihood of the development of theory will be significantly impacted by Gumperz' ability to: (1) incorporate the impact of race on interactions; and (2) re-evaluate the significance of a speech community's way of speaking and the corresponding costs associated with adaptation. Gumperz fails to address socio-political implications of the negotiation process between dominant and non-dominant interlocutors, as characterized by the difference between his conceptualization of "ways of speaking" and that of Dell Hymes. Also, he does not recognize the presence of other contextualization cues which occur in interaction such as race, gender, and age. As an example, examining the role of race for African Americans in social interaction indicates that race situates the interaction between Whites and African-Americans, and precedes verbal communication cues. As a result, race should be an integral aspect of theories associated with problematic interaction. (Twenty-eight references are attached.) (RS)

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The Socio-Political Implications of John J. Gumperz' Interactional Analytic Approach

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Abstract

In this paper, we indicate that Gumperz' (1982a, 1982b) interactional analysis goes beyond traditional work in discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and ethnography. His work goes beyond the creation of taxonomies and may, ultimately, lead to the development of new sociolinguistic theory regarding problematic interaction. The likelihood of the development of theory will be significantly impacted by Gumperz' ability to: 1)incorporate the impact of race on interactions, and 2) re-evaluate the significance of a speech community's way of speaking and the corresponding costs associated with adaptation.

Our focus is on the shortcomings of Gumperz' research program as explicated in Discourse Strategies (1982a) and Language and Social Identity (1982b). Specifically, we note his failure to address socio-political implications of the negotiation process between dominant and non-dominant interlocutors, as characterized by the difference between his conceptualization of "ways of speaking" and that of Dell Hymes. Also, we note that he does not recognize the presence of other contextualization cues which occur in interaction such as race, gender, and age.

As an example, we examine the role of race for African-Americans in social interaction as a contextualization cue. Our primary premise is that race situates the interaction between

whites and African-Americans, and precedes verbal communication cues. As a result, race should be an integral aspect of theories associated with problematic interaction.

The Socio-Political Implications of John J. Gumperz' Interactional Analytic Approach

Introduction

Approximately a decade ago, John J. Gumperz initiated an investigative approach to communicative interaction which he believed exceeded the groundwork laid by researchers in the areas of linguistics, conversation analysis, and ethnography. His particular approach, explicated primarily in Discourse Strategies (1982a) and Language and Social Identity (1982b), continues to inspire research utilizing (Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Murray, 1991; Yamada, 1990), expanding (Chick, 1990; Tyler & Davies, 1990), and criticizing (Ensink, 1987) his methodological framework.

Gumperz (1979, 1982a, 1982b) acknowledges the significant contributions of the linguistic, conversation analysis, and ethnographic "traditions" to the body of sociolinguistic knowledge, but maintains that his interactional analytic approach moves beyond these three traditions. Gumperz' approach investigates what happens when people from two heterogeneous communicative systems are brought together, rather than the more traditional focus on interaction within homogeneous groups. His ultimate goal is to provide an analysis illustrating how cooperative communication leads to harmony and understanding.

Gumperz maintains that a sociolinguistic theory addressing communicative interaction must explore the linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge needed to elicit conversational involvement, must move beyond existing grammars and ethnographies, must address degrees of differentiation rather than focusing on starkly dichotomous groups, and must be speaker focused. Gumperz creates taxonomies based on elements previously conceived of as "surface factors of language" such as code-switching and prosody. The creation of these taxonomies, he proposes, is the first step toward the development of a sociolinguistic theory addressing miscommunication.

Taxonomies help one to label phenomena. Taxonomies might inspire, and help to summarize descriptive studies, but they do not provide explanations of relationships among phenomena. Theories, on the other hand, inspire and summarize verificational studies which test specific hypotheses (Deutsch, 1952; Littlejohn, 1989; Zetterberg, 1963, 1965). There is a three-stage methodology associated with Gumperz' approach which encompasses noting co-occurrence patterns, defining a behavior which conforms to such a pattern, and designating the behavior's function and effect within the interaction.

An analysis of Gumperz' investigation of prosody provides one illustration of his move toward the development of a taxonomy. When investigating prosody, Gumperz is interested in

identifying what information prosodic cues provide during conversational exchange as well as how they assist interlocutors in initiating and sustaining such exchanges. As he seeks answers to these questions, he defines the role prosody plays in conversation (e.g., turn-taking, chunking streams of talk for effective decoding, etc.) and, ultimately, constructs a taxonomy. The creation of a taxonomy assists in filling the gaps in the extant literature, constructing an explanation accounting for the array of variables operating during conversational exchange, and providing information of use to interlocutors in reducing the likelihood of miscommunication.

Although Gumperz is a sociolinguist, the aim of his work falls squarely within the domain of communication scholars and, therefore, merits evaluation for its contribution to the communication discipline. In light of this, the purpose of this paper is to explore his work in relation to the study of communication. The first part of this paper will further highlight the interactional analytic approach by contrasting Gumperz' discussion of contextualization cues and ways of speaking with that of Hymes. The second part will note the socio-political implications of the interactional analytic approach by discussing Gumperz' expectation of adaptation on the part of minority groups and his failure to acknowledge the impact of non-linguistic cues other than prosody (i.e. race, age, and

gender). Finally, we will use the African-American experience as a means to illustrate how race complicates Gumperz' notion of conversational negotiation.

Interactional Analytic Approach

Contextualization cues. Gumperz is particularly interested in miscommunication that occurs in intercultural interaction. He defines communication as a social activity involving the coordination of two or more individuals where communication is an intentional, planned, coordinated effort signalling involvement rather than "mere talk" involving the ability to produce sentences. The basic premise underlying his explanation of miscommunication is that interlocutors do not share the background assumptions that make possible accurate interpretation of each other's message behaviors. In other words, interlocutors engaging in unsuccessful communication often have different communicative and social histories, different ways of speaking, and different ideas about how to communicate. Interaction, successful or not, is influenced by a set of contextualization cues brought to it by participants.

Gumperz is interested in what is created between two or more individuals in a communicative exchange. How do they come to understand each other, how do they allude to shared backgrounds, values and experiences, and what happens when the unexpected occurs? Gumperz stresses the role of conversational inference in

engaging in successful communication. He suggests we look at many aspects of discourse in investigating the misunderstanding that can occur between people of different cultures, even when those people are speaking the same language. If, somewhere during the interaction, conversational inferences are not accurate, misunderstanding results. With this misunderstanding comes the breakdown of communication.

Eliciting mutual cooperation requires the ability to send appropriate cues to a fellow interlocutor so that the nature of the activity being proposed, the behavior and speaking style being suggested, and the relationship being characterized are accurately inferred from the cues provided. Gumperz draws upon the work of Paul Grice and the notion of implicature to develop further his line of thought regarding the process of eliciting cooperation. According to Grice (1975), individuals who converse engage in an unspoken contractual agreement evolving around four maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Violations of any of the four maxims (or a combination of them) signal differences between the interlocutors capable of producing miscommunication and, after repeated violations, misunderstandings. The end result is the inability to elicit the cooperation and involvement necessary to achieve one's goal(s). Gumperz uses these four maxims as a framework to determine the social assumptions and expectations of interlocutors in

problematic interactions.

Gumperz extends the four maxims associated with Grice's "Cooperative Principle" (Grice, 1975) by identifying specific discourse strategies used to comply with the unstated maxims and, unlike Grice, notes the existence of different standards for acceptable behavior depending upon the speech community. Examples of discourse strategies used to transmit cues to a fellow interlocutor include: prosody, alternation, code-switching, word borrowing, semantics, syntax, etc. It is the use of appropriate cues which enhance the likelihood of accurate inference which, ultimately, assists in the achievement of one's goal(s). Thus, conversational interaction is a complex process quite dependent upon the communicative competence of the interlocutors and their ability not simply to know the words, but when and how to use them appropriately (Hymes, 1974) along with the proper use of paralinguistic cues. Gumperz sees control over this range of communicative strategies and awareness of their signalling potential (alluding to shared history, values, and mutual obligations) as paramount, and collects data which contribute to the body of sociolinguistic knowledge.

Along with lexical and syntactic options, Gumperz groups prosody, code-switching, co-occurrence expectations, and formulaic expressions together under the heading of contextualization cues. They form the background information and

resources interlocutors bring to interaction. Gumperz notes that the store of information interlocutors bring to discourse is largely a function of their previous communicative experience. Through their experience, interlocutors build a repertoire of cues that they use to signal meaning in discourse. When interlocutors share a common background, they are more apt also to share a common store of cues and meanings and, therefore, their communication with each other is more likely to be satisfying.

Particularly illustrative of how one language can be used and interpreted differently by people in different contexts is Gumperz' discussion of code- and style-switching. People speaking the same language can use it in quite diverse ways. For instance, the various dialects of English can be looked at as different codes. Although in one situation it may be appropriate for a speaker to use Black English rather than Standard English, it is probable that, for this same speaker, Black English will not be appropriate in all contexts. Knowledge of when to speak in a given code is an important factor in attaining successful communication. The fact that the appropriateness of each type of code is context governed reinforces Gumperz' notion of communication as a context bound phenomenon.

Gumperz also delineates the role of co-occurrence rules, rules that govern what is appropriate in a given interaction

considering the other linguistic and paralinguistic features present, in the maintenance of interaction. Rules of co-occurrence are an important resource when determining the appropriateness of code-switching. Code-switching may be expected in certain situations, but completely inappropriate in others. The roles of co-occurrence rules, code-switching, and context can be seen when examining formulaic expressions in which particular meanings are exchanged between participants using known sequences of utterances, the understanding of which presupposes shared cultural knowledge. Gumperz furnishes an example of this when discussing an incident in which a Black student trained in interviewing procedures goes to the home of a Black couple to administer a survey to the woman who lives there. When the interviewer is greeted by the woman's husband, the interviewer responds in a very businesslike manner to a comment that required him to be aware of, and to provide, the appropriate cultural response. His response did not follow the formulaic exchange that was expected by the husband and the remainder of the interaction at the house was consequently stilted. After the incident, the student remarked that in trying to act professionally, he had failed to recognize the importance of the comment made to him by the woman's husband (1982a, p. 134). Realizing and expressing the expected response given the context and, therefore, displaying shared cultural background and

knowledge, presumably would have facilitated the success of the rest of the interaction.

Prosody is also significant in determining the meaning of a participant's utterance. When looking at prosody,

> the empirical cues involved are ordinarily studied under three general headings: (a) pitch contours or intonation proper; (b) sentence stress involving the setting off of particular utterance segments by means of loudness or duration; (c) paralinguistic phenomena of pitch register, tempo and overall loudness (1982a, p. 107).

Knowing a language does not necessarily mean knowing the prosodic norms of the language. To illustrate this point, Gumperz uses examples from interaction between American or British English speakers and West Indian English speakers. The two groups of speakers stress different words in discourse and, as is often the case, the stress has meaning to the interlocutors. The meaning the stress carries varies between groups. It is this variation in meaning that often leads to misinterpretation and miscommunication in exchanges and, ultimately, to the reinforcement of stereotypes each group has about the other. For instance, syntactic, lexical, and prosodic knowledge are required for a participant to make accurate inferences.

Ways of Speaking. The premise that miscommunication results from

lack of understanding of various cultures is an important outcome of Gumperz' work. He emphasizes the importance of understanding participants' various communicative styles in intercultural communication. He maintains that by attaining this understanding and taking it into consideration in interaction, communication problems in intercultural contact can be solved.

Understanding can be realized in two ways. First, participants can come from similar backgrounds and already possess a shared world view, a shared idea of what is to occur when they meet. Second, participants can make a conscious effort to understand that they each come from different backgrounds and must take their differences into consideration when negotiating goals of interaction. Awareness of the contextualization cues present in interaction and the ways of speaking the cues comprise can facilitate understanding of interlocutors' behavior.

Gumperz emphasizes that interlocutors from diverse cultures can have different ways of speaking and that the dissimilarities can increase the chances of miscommunication. He focuses on the ways of speaking of people involved in interaction in order to pinpoint where misunderstanding occurs. Gumperz proposes the following conceptualization of "ways of speaking":

> By "ways of speaking" we refer to the actual linguistic cues used through which information...is signalled. This level includes grammar and lexicon as

> well as prosody, pausing, idioms, and other formulaic utterances. Our basic assumption is that in conversation we simultaneously interpret and communicate at several levels of generality (1982b, p. 13).

Throughout his research, Gumperz presents examples of people with different ways of speaking failing to understand each other. These failures often occur in situations where understanding is crucial, i.e., in a job interview.

The term "ways of speaking" was formulated by Hymes in 1974 in an essay by that name. According to Hymes, ways of speaking are composed of means of speech and speech economy (Hymes, 1974). The means of speech parallel Gumperz' contextualization cues as features of speakers' styles. Speech economy, however, includes all of the available speech resources in the speech community, including the norms of interaction and the underlying attitudes and beliefs of the community, areas that Gumperz does not incorporate fully in his suggestions for solving intercultural miscommunication.

Unlike Hymes, Gumperz does not underscore the centrality of the cultural function a way of speaking performs for an individual as a member of a community or the underlying attitudes and beliefs a way of speaking signifies. Gumperz does acknowledge the cultural significance of ways of speaking when he

states that

> it is commonly argued that where intelligibility is not in question, language differences serve primarily to mark social identity and are perpetuated in accordance with established norms and traditions (1982a, p. 39).

However, his main concern lies in discerning how miscommunication that results from diverse ways of speaking can be avoided rather than discovering the meanings that ways of speaking have for interlocutors.

To this end, Gumperz illustrates and explains how differences in contextualization cues lead to miscommunication between people. He establishes the premise that sharing the same expectations of conversation is not a given when people interact; rather, it is a function of similar communicative experience, socio-cultural background, shared history, and culture.

Hymes, on the other hand, is not so concerned with the miscommunication that can occur between people who have different ways of speaking as he is with the meaning a way of speaking has for particular people. Although Gumperz recognizes that people are more apt to share common ways of speaking if they also share socio-cultural background, history, and culture, Hymes focuses on how shared socio-cultural background, history, and culture are evident in and celebrated in a group's way of speaking. Hymes makes central the ways in which speech can help elucidate a

culture's way of being whereas Gumperz makes central the goal of easing communication between cultures by altering ways of speaking.

Socio-political Implications

There are many questions left unaddressed in Gumperz' work. Who is required to give up what in interaction? What is gained in negotiation by the two parties involved? What are the incentives for the dominant group to compromise given that it is the non-dominant group that is bound to benefit from that negotiation? Finally, what is the price that interlocutors must pay for smoother interpersonal communication to occur between members of different groups?

These questions begin to address the socio-political implications of Gumperz' work. They are also difficult to answer in light of the existing social structures in which all communication occurs. Nevertheless, without the explicit recognition of the cultural significance of ways of speaking, Gumperz addresses a simpler pragmatic problem with no cultural implications except for more successful practical intercultural communication. With the addition of Hymes' notion of the cultural significance of ways of speaking, the move is no longer so simple or so innocently practical. Rather, change in discourse is only possible at the expense of some change of life for particular people, some loss of cultural identity, values,

attitudes and beliefs signified by their speech.

The lack of emphasis on the cultural significance of ways of speaking has considerable impact in determining ways to help people of different backgrounds understand each other. Many of the examples provided by Gumperz and his colleagues show a non-dominant person trying to obtain something from someone in power. For instance, West Indian English speakers are featured being interviewed by native English speakers for jobs. When the miscommunication occurs, it is the West Indian English speaker who suffers the consequences. Specifically, it is the West Indian English speaker who does not get the job.

The resources of a community, such as jobs, are more apt to be accessed by people who know and enact the dominant way of being of the community. In Gumperz' model, it seems that the way for people to procure community resources is to modify the way they interact. Someone must change his or her way of speaking in order to gain the resources of the community. Gumperz' explicit suggestion is that participants should come to mutual understanding of each others' ways of speaking and negotiate mutually satisfying goals of interaction. However, because it is the dominant culture that holds the key to community resources, those who are in the less well represented cultures seem left to change or adapt to the dominant speakers' style in order to gain access to the resources. This implicit suggestion contradicts

Gumperz' idea of negotiation in interaction and instead implies total adaptation by one party.

Adaptation, however, is not such a terrible matter if ways of speaking are defined as Gumperz defines them. A simple change in prosody or word choice, for example, would be easy for most people to accomplish and would facilitate successful communication. However, if ways of speaking are defined as Hymes suggests, adaptation can be devastating to members of cultures. Considering adaptation in respect to Hymes' work enables us to see some additional implications of changing discourse. That is, if the way of speaking in a community serves to maintain the social identity of speakers and is a culturally significant activity, then changing the way of speaking necessarily changes the way of life of the interlocutors.

Because it seems more the responsibility of non-dominant cultures to adapt to dominant cultures in order to obtain community resources, it also seems that the cultural loss will be most evident in the non-dominant cultures. The focus of Gumperz' research is how speakers of the "minority" language can adapt their language to approximate patterns of the "dominant" language while merely asking for awareness of differences on the part of "dominant" language speakers. Throughout the explication and rationalization of his proposed research program, Gumperz implicitly addresses a socio-political agenda that values

dominant cultures while simultaneously devaluing others.

Gumperz' approach is a pragmatic one that attempts to solve the problem of miscommunication by suggesting that people learn to speak in the appropriate way in order to interact successfully with each other. This approach succeeds in fostering smoother daily communication between people of different cultures. Gumperz promotes the idea that all people need to understand that diverse rules for interaction can be brought to an exchange and he encourages people to adjust their speech to accommodate differences. However, in the cases Gumperz himself presents, it seems that the only people who would benefit economically from such change would be those in subordinate cultures. What, then, is the incentive for people in dominant cultures to change their ways of speaking?

Gumperz does not take into consideration the overall power structure involved in interaction in any context. In so doing, he does not acknowledge the importance of cues such as race, age, and gender in determining the course of conversation. Rather, he sees a more neutral starting point, where the problem is more about people as individuals not getting along than about the social structure. Gumperz' sociolinguistic approach can be seen as maintaining a conservative stance based on the desire to elicit harmony and cooperation without significantly altering the social status quo.

Gumperz provides knowledge to aid individuals in adapting to the requirements of the dominant American or British society and, thereby, to gain access to the economic benefits a system has to offer, e.g., jobs. However, he does not challenge the system which dictates what serves as acceptable requirements for upward mobility within a society. Unlike critical theorists, Gumperz desires that the knowledge which is gained be used to promote harmony rather than an understanding of how such language creates and maintains oppression. Regardless of whether distinctions along racial, age, or gender lines are consciously acknowledged, they are a present factor in interaction. Race will be used as an example to illustrate the sociopolitical implications of Gumperz' work.

Race and the African-American Experience

> They consciously choose their speech, their walk, their mode of dress and car; they trim their hair lest a mountainous Afro set them apart. They know they have a high visibility, and they realize that their success depends not only on their ability, but also on their white colleagues' feeling comfortable with them (Campbell cited in Fordham, 1988, p. 60)

Race: A Non-linguistic Contextualization Cue. Gumperz provides a meticulous analysis of contextualization cues which occur during interaction and which serve to "frame the discourse." However,

he fails to address several other important non-linguistic contextualization cues which co-exist along with language--specifically age, gender, and race. For instance, he notes in the postscript to Discourse Strategies (1982a, p. 210) that historical and cultural factors may influence interaction, but the actual text does not address the impact of race, and the prejudice and hatred it can elicit between heterogeneous interlocutors.

In the introduction to Language and Social Identity, Gumperz indicates:

> The key point of our argument in this book is that social identity and ethnicity are in large part established and maintained through language (1982b, p. 7).

He then proceeds to discuss conceptualizations of the old and new ethnicity. At this point, it becomes apparent that Gumperz does not fully grasp the interactional complexities for particular populations he has studied. For Blacks in the U.S. and U.K., for example, there is no old and new ethnicity - there is only Blackness and the corresponding societal stereotypes associated with being Black. For Asians, living within the U.S. and possessing noticeable epicanthic eyefold, there is no old and new ethnicity. For dark-complexed Mexicans and Native Americans, living within the U.S., there is no old and new ethnicity. For members of these populations, most heterogeneous communicative

encounters are first marked by physical features, in particular skin color, prior to actual verbal exchange. Depending upon the society in question, race may be the dominant contextualization cue.

Isajiw (1974) notes the absence of explicit definitions in the work of social scientists "dealing with one or another aspect of ethnicity" as well as the absence of rationales for not providing such definitions. Gumperz, too, does not define ethnicity for his readers, but his discussion of the old and new ethnicity can be seen as an indicator that he agrees with a view of ethnicity which de-emphasizes race while emphasizing a previous history of immigrant (European) status.

Implicit within Gumperz' interactional approach is the belief that both interlocutors begin the verbal exchange with a base of neutrality or equal footing. Keith Chick's (1990) analysis of English-speaking Zulu and native English-speaking South African whites extends Gumperz' approach by incorporating face needs. Chick incorporates face needs as an additional tool once he becomes aware of the status differences between his interlocutors. Therefore, during Chick's research it becomes apparent that a base of neutrality cannot be assumed.

Race and Social Identity. Individuals from certain races cannot alter social identity by altering their language use to the extent accomplishable by individuals of European descent. When

descent rules are not applied, race is assigned by the "actual variety of visible intergrades" (Pettigrew, 1979). In many societies, "social race" relies on common socio-cultural features and descent lines, though the actual physical phenotypes among group members may vary significantly. However, in the United States, a "social fiction" has been created by assigning children of mixed marriages to the lower-ranking parent regardless of physical phenotypes.

A sociobiological approach to behavior indicates that animals are social to the extent that cooperation is mutually beneficial. Animals are also nepotistic, preferring kin over non-kin and close kin over distant kin. In the case of humans, race and ethnicity are viewed as extensions of kinship representing attenuated forms of kin selection. van den Berghe (1978) believes that prior to mass migration, imperialism, and colonial expansion, groups distinguished themselves from their neighbors based on salient cultural differences. Physical criteria were salient only to the extent they did an effective and easy job of discriminating kin and non-kin. However, with colonial expansion and mass migration, it became possible to make fairly accurate kin judgments based upon skin color.

In some countries, such as the U.S., physical phenotypes serve to "situate" the conversational interaction and to establish the relative roles of the interlocutors. Skin color,

therefore, is a contextualization cue which operates prior to actual verbal interaction. Physical phenotypes are so salient that only knowledge of the actual racial lineage of an interlocutor can override the perceptions formed based upon physical features. Therefore, although an interlocutor possesses European white physical phenotypes, the very knowledge of African heritage institutes a default system of perception based upon the interlocutor's "subordinate minority" heritage (Cayton & Drake, 1946).

Identity Options Available to African-Americans. Considering Gumperz' suggested linguistic and prosodic adaptations, four options are available to African-Americans: 1) refusing to adapt, 2) integrating the linguistic and prosodic cues of Black and white culture (biculturalism), 3) overlooking their African heritage while becoming raceless, and 4) denying their African heritage while adopting white culture completely in a "passing" adaptive move. The latter option, of course, is limited to African-Americans with physical phenotypes generally associated with the white population and whose African heritage can be successfully hidden. For most African-Americans "passing" (at least for white) is not a viable option; thus, racelessness represents the furthest position they can move along the social identity risk continuum created to visually represent this paper's position. Visually, these four options can be

represented as follows:

African-American Social Identity Risk Continuum

REFUSAL TO ADAPT--BICULTURALISM--RACELESSNESS--PASSING

"Overlooking" African heritage will be used to characterize the racelessness adaptive option whereas "denial" will characterize and distinguish the passing option from one of racelessness.

Fordham (1988) notes that racelessness involves taking on attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics which are not common to African-Americans in an attempt to "circumvent the stigma attached to being Black, and to achieve vertical mobility" (p. 58). A key characteristic of the raceless persona is denial of the existence of racism as an endemic aspect of life in the United States.

The left half of the continuum consists of options associated with refusal to adapt to white cultural patterns of behavior (including ways of speaking) and biculturalism. Rose, Rothman, and Wilson (1973) describe younger Blacks living at the poverty line as separatists who are unwilling to integrate into white society. Ogbu (1990) describes African-Americans as involuntary minorities rather than immigrant minorities. He goes further to note that acquiring English for the immigrant minority is akin to a white American acquiring French prior to visiting France. Learning a new language is not equated with giving up group identity but, rather, is associated with upward mobility.

Involuntary minorities (such as African-Americans and Native American Indians) do not see cultural differences (including white English) as simply barriers to overcome but, rather, see such differences as markers of group identity which should be maintained.

Refusal to adapt to and assimilate the dominant white culture is partly attributable to: 1) a recognition of discrimination (e.g., employment ceilings) still faced by African-Americans who are willing to adapt, and 2) an oppressive societal system which creates inequitable conditions making ascension and acceptance more difficult for particular groups. In the former case, African-Americans see no reason to compromise or sacrifice their identity for the unlikely possibility of economic success and acceptance by whites. In the latter case, African-Americans see no hope and are socialized by the dominant group to believe they are incapable of complex cognitive processes (e.g., math and science) and, thus, menial employment and poverty are viewed as inevitable (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Whether viewed positively or negatively, as in the latter case, the maintenance of social identity becomes of paramount importance in refusing to adapt. Finally, biculturalism addresses dual world interaction. African-Americans who are bicultural retain their African heritage while adopting white culture as well. This phenomenon is often characterized as

"walking between two worlds," having "a foot in each world," "crossover," and "strad[dling] two worlds" (Page, 1986; Morgan, 1985). Such characterization stems from the need to meet the cultural expectations of two groups perceived as so different they may as well occupy (and, ironically, once did) separate hemispheres.

This continuum does not apply to all interlocutors engaged in interaction. This social identity continuum reflects choices made by the African-American interlocutor during interaction with whites. Particular consequences are associated with each of the choices plotted along the continuum. As the amount of adaptation to white culture increases, the risks to social identity increase as well. Therefore, the positions along the continuum can also be interpreted as representing being oneself (maintaining racial social identity), compromising self, sacrificing self, and denying self. Ironically, an analysis of the consequences associated with the four options reveals all four represent a "no-win" situation for members of this subordinate minority group.

Consequences. Biculturalism, racelessness, and passing are all adaptations which increase the likelihood of economic success for African-Americans. These adaptations can be characterized as a means to escape the societal ostracism and poverty associated with those who refuse to adapt (Cayton & Drake, 1946; Edwards &

Polite, 1992; Fordham, 1988; Ogbu, 1990). However, it is important to note economic success is, at best, tenuous. According to Ross, Rothman, and Wilson (1973) positive race relations are not necessarily fostered when Blacks begin to compete with whites in areas (jobs, housing, etc.) once considered the prerogative of whites.

Bicultural adaptation depends upon how effectively African-Americans can walk between two worlds. Ironically, economic success depends, not on the African-American interlocutor, but on his/her white counterpart's willingness to cooperatively participate in overlooking African heritage (Davis & Watson, 1982; Edwards, 1987).

Successful racelessness, and the corresponding economic rewards, are also dependent upon the willingness of whites to accept and embrace the African-American's use of the prosodic and lexical cues of the dominant white culture. Although there is no significant difference in economic consequences between the bicultural and racelessness adaptive moves (because skin color can, in fact, be seen), the two are distinct in another way. This distinction derives from the willingness of the African-American to acknowledge the tenuousness of his or her circumstances due to the tendency to deny the existence of systemic racism. In the case of racelessness, the tentative nature of success often is not acknowledged as the existence of

systemic racism is denied (Fordham, 1988).

The likelihood of economic success is increased significantly for those African-Americans with the physical phenotypes which allow them the option of "passing" for white. According to Cole, being perceived as a member of the dominant racial group has obvious advantages in terms of social and economic mobility (cited in Rothman et al., 1973). However, despite the increased likelihood of financial success and social acceptance, risks are still associated with this option. One risk is the complete loss of African-American social identity which can result from denying one's heritage. A second risk is the revelation of one's racial heritage among whites [per Cayton & Drake (1946) African-Americans are less likely to betray the racial identity of group members who are attempting to pass for numerous reasons] which then takes precedence over physical phenotypes (Pettigrew, 1979; van den Berghe, 1978). The consequences of being identified as Black after denying such racial identity can significantly complicate the psychological, physical, and financial well-being of the African-American who once was able to "pass."

Finally, of course, refusing to adapt also results in a particular set of consequences. Unlike their bicultural, raceless, and passing counterparts, African-Americans who either refuse to adapt, or are discouraged from adapting, are blocked

from even the tenuous economic resources attainable by their peers. Upward mobility is virtually impossible. Thus, poverty and ostracism by the dominant racial group are the consequences of maintaining social identity.

What is the price of adaptation and harmony? For the African-American, it is a high price indeed - self-denial, severed kinship ties, feelings of deficiency, and the need to be "ameliorated, remediated, or otherwise altered" (Edwards, 1987; Edwards & Polite, 1992).

Conclusion

John Gumperz' work is important in its move toward the development of sociolinguistic theory. He pushes students of language and communication closer to systematically interrelating propositions and creating new sociolinguistic theories capable of explaining the communicative complexities of encounters between heterogeneous groups. It is inappropriate simply to characterize his work as involving the establishment of taxonomies as his work appears to begin rather than end with taxonomies.

For instance, when investigating code-switching, Gumperz notes "a list of functions cannot by itself explain the linguistic bases of a listener's perceptions and how they affect interpretation" and, although Gumperz does not offer an explanation, he does proceed to note the difficulty in postulating extralinguistic social factors and background

knowledge affecting switching. He also provides a list of confounding variables which must be considered when attempting to offer an explanation of a listener's perceptual and interpretive processes. In addition, Gumperz uses networks in a speech community to explain why a group might adopt code-switching rather than total adoption of another group's language. He maintains that networks, and their corresponding system of membership expectations, play an integral role in the adaptation of language to include code-switching or alternation. In investigating code-switching in this way, Gumperz does more than simply provide a taxonomic description; he moves in the direction of theoretic explanation.

In this paper, we have tried to point to an area which Gumperz' approach does not emphasize, an area that we feel would significantly strengthen his program. By not explicitly recognizing the cultural value talk has for groups of people Gumperz fails to address the broad implications of people changing the way they speak. In addition, without the explicit recognition of the social inequities present in encounters between heterogeneous interlocutors, Gumperz presents a proposal for conversational negotiation that begins at an unrealistic neutral point.

Gumperz also does not recognize many of the non-linguistic contextualization cues that can greatly influence interaction

between both heterogeneous and homogeneous interlocutors. The African-American experience in the U.S. serves as an example of the implications of changing talk for a group of people, and the non-neutral starting point of conversations implicit in any social context. In particular, the African-American experience illustrates how non-linguistic cues come to bear on interaction.

In many ways, Gumperz' analysis goes beyond the work traditionally performed in discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and ethnography. His work also goes beyond the creation of taxonomies and might, ultimately, lead to the development of new sociolinguistic theory regarding problematic interaction. The likelihood of the development of theory will be significantly impacted by efforts to: 1) incorporate, rather than ignore, the pact of race on interactions involving heterogeneous interlocutors, and 2) re-evaluate the significance of a speech community's way of speaking and the corresponding costs associated with adaptation.

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